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REMARKS

Applicant is grateful for the telephonic interview conducted on March 31, 2003, in which the Applicant's attorney and the Examiner discussed the relatedness of the MEKK molecules of the instant invention.

In response to the Office Communication, Applicants traverse the restriction to one of SEQ ID NOs:1-4. As discussed in the interview, SEQ ID Nos:1-4 represent MEKK1 variants. The sequence of the 672 amino acid MEKK1 protein (set forth as SEQ ID NO:2, encoded by the nucleic acid sequence set forth as SEQ ID NO:1) is included within the 1593 amino acid MEKK1 protein (set forth as SEQ ID NO:4, encoded by the nucleic acid molecule set forth as SEQ ID NO:3).

Accordingly, a search of the MEKK1 sequences set forth as SEQ ID NOs:1-2 would be coextensive with any search of the MEKK1 sequences set forth as SEQ ID NOs:3-4. Based on the above, Applicant requests rejoinder of Groups I and II. (SEQ ID NOs:1-4).

In order to be responsive, the MEKK1 sequence of SEQ ID NO:4 is elected for search purposes. As stated previously, as such a search would also uncover any art related to SEQ ID NO:1, 2 and 3, Applicant respectfully requests rejoinder of the subject matter and now awaits further substantive examination of the claimed subject matter.

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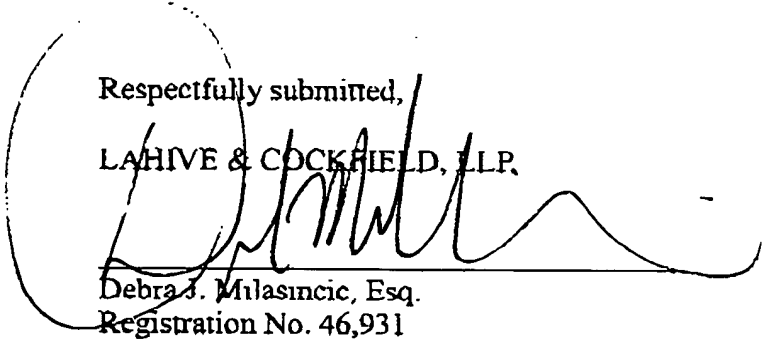
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CONCLUSION

If there are any remaining issues or the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation with Applicant's Attorney would be helpful in expediting prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (617) 227-7400.

Respectfully submitted,

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